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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 27 August 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have been instructed to bring the following to your immediate attention. Early this morning, 27 August 1996, Israeli forces, including police and army personnel, closed the quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem, transported cranes and bulldozers within the walls of the Old City and demolished a building belonging to the Burj al-Laqlaq Society near the quarter of Bab Hatta.

The Burj al-Laqlaq Society, which provides services to Palestinian children, including the physically handicapped, has been registered since 1994 with the Union of Charitable Societies and has also fulfilled obligatory registration with the Israeli authorities. The building structure, which was 120 square metres, was situated on approximately 9,000 square meters of land, including a playground for children.

This destructive measure taken by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people in Jerusalem is a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. It is also a violation of various

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* A/51/150.

relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, which prohibit any attempts to alter the character, demographic composition and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. In addition, the measure taken clearly violates the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and seriously threatens the peace process as a whole.

Such an illegal and dangerous act stems from the Government of Israel's policies, which aim at forcibly uprooting the Palestinian people and their institutions from Jerusalem. Clearly, this most recent measure represents a revival of old, malicious plans to confiscate the land and build units for Israeli settlers within the walls of the Old City. It is worth mentioning that this act comes only weeks after the decision of the Government of Israel to lift restrictions on settlement activities.

We expect the international community to take a clear and firm position, based on international law and in accordance with United Nations resolutions, against all such Israeli violations and illegal practices. In particular, the Security Council is expected to guarantee that the Israeli authorities compensate the Burj al-Laqlaq Society and allow for the reconstruction of the building. The international community should also demonstrate a serious willingness to prevent the destruction of the peace process and to safeguard that process towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 33, 35 and 85 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Marwan JILANI
Chargé d'affaires a.i.